

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action dated December 3, 2002. Attached hereto, therefore, are a Request for Two-month Extension of Time and the appropriate fee.

In the above Office Action, Claim 14 is rejected as anticipated by Preece and Claims 1-2, 6-9, 11-13 and 17-18 are rejected as obvious over Preece in view of Kusumoto. In recently reviewing the case, however, Applicant realized that Preece does not disclose a metal-containing prepreg layer that is wrapped at the tip of a shaft as recited by Applicant's original and amended claims. In particular, it is clear that Preece's "loaded film" 10 (see Figure 1A) is wrapped at the butt end of the shaft and not near the "distal end" or tip. In fact, as made clear at Column 3, Line 64 to Column 4, Line 1, the plies illustrated in Figures 1A and 1D are wrapped at a "starting point" 28 that is at some predetermined distance from the "distal tip 26."

Applicant's attorney brought this discovery to the Examiner's attention by voice message, and the Examiner left a return message suggesting that Applicant point this out in a written response. This response is the result.

In view of the above corrected understanding of Preece, it appears that the original claims as well as the amended claims are allowable over Preece whether taken alone or in combination with any other reference, because all such claims specifically require:

A layer of metal-containing prepreg wrapped at a tip of the shaft.

In view of this apparent allowability, Applicants have added new claims 19-32, which claims correspond to original claims 1-14. In addition, Applicant has added new claims 33-41, which claims are similar to newly added claims 19-32 with the additional requirement in base claim 33 that the metal-containing prepreg contains a "metal fiber" and is wrapped at "an innermost layer" at the tip of the shaft:

A layer of metal-containing prepreg that contains a metal fiber and is wrapped at an innermost layer at a tip of the shaft.

New base Claim 33 is comparable to original claim 10 directed to a metal-containing prepreg that contains "a metal fiber." In the most recent Office Action, Claim 10 was rejected over Preece in view of Kusumoto and further in view of Hsu. Applicant respectfully submits that new Claim 33 is allowable over Preece, Kusumoto and Hsu because Preece fails to disclose anything other than a powder-containing prepreg and Hsu specifically discloses a weighted section 12 that is formed on an outermost layer of the shaft (see Hsu, Column 1, Lines 56-61


It appearing that Claims 1-14 and 17-41 are in condition for patentability, Applicant earnestly solicits a Notice of Allowance.

From the voice message left with the Applicant's attorney on Tuesday, April 29, 2003, Applicant understands that Examiner Blau preliminarily agrees that the Preece reference is inapplicable but that a further search may be conducted. If it turns out that alternative references are revealed that are arguably relevant to the patentability of Applicant's claim, Applicant would appreciate receipt of a Non-Final Office Action in order to appropriately consider those references.


The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney if it appears that a telephone conference would further this case in any way.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: ~~Assistant~~
Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231 on
May 5, 2003
*P.O. Box 1450,
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by Angela Williams


Signature
May 5, 2003

Respectfully submitted,


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